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## 5. OCCURRENCE OF LITTLE CORMORANT *PHALACROCORAX NIGER* IN LADAKH

On the afternoon of August 18, 2002 between 1330-1340 hours, an adult Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* was observed in the Indus river near Mahe (33° 05' N and 78° 02' E) in Ladakh, far to the north of its hitherto known range in the Indian subcontinent. The bird was immediately identified as Little Cormorant, a species familiar to the observers. The individual was observed repeatedly diving for fish in the murky water of the swollen river.

Ali and Ripley (1981), Grimmett *et al.* (1998) and Kazmierczak and van Perlo (2000) do not mention Ladakh in the species distribution. As far as we are aware, there are no previous records of the Little Cormorant from Ladakh except one recent sighting from Shey fish tanks near Leh where two birds were sighted in the summer of 2001 (Otto Pfister *pers.*

*comm.*)

We thank Otto Pfister for providing us the recent sight record.

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## 6. AN INSTANCE OF MORTALITY AND NOTES ON BEHAVIOUR OF BLACK-NECKED STORKS *EPHIPPIORHYNCHUS ASIATICUS*

The Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* is one of the least studied large water birds in India and very little is known of their ecology (Rahmani 1989). During fieldwork in Etawah and Mainpuri districts, Uttar Pradesh between September 1999 and July 2002, I maintained detailed records of all sightings of Black-necked Storks. In this note, an instance of adult mortality and some interesting behaviours are documented. Fieldwork was carried out in an area of c. 500 sq. km, within the towns of Etawah, Karhal, Kishni and Baralokpur.

### Mortality

In December 1999, an adult male Black-necked Stork was found dead below electric lines at Saiphai (26° 57.063' N, 78° 57.518' E). The body had been in water for three to four days when discovered and it was not possible to ascertain

whether the bird had been killed by collision or electrocution with the wire. The stork had been seen to roost alone in an adjoining field regularly and was most likely killed while returning to the roost or flying from it to a wetland across the road, where it used to feed during the day. The prevalence of morning and evening fog during December in the area must have led to the mortality. From interviews with villagers it appeared that storks die infrequently in the area due to collision with electric lines.

While electrocution/ collision with electric wires of large-bodied water birds is widespread in occurrence, it has not been previously reported for Black-necked Storks, and in Ciconiidae, collision-related mortality has been previously recorded only for the White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* (Bevanger 1998). In fact, there is no reference in literature to any form of adult mortality in Black-necked Storks. However, the